

*A*  
*J*

36. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein said determining of said single composite operating characteristic value comprises computing a weighted index that weighs relative importance of said at least one operating characteristic.

37. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said determining of operating characteristic value(s) further comprises determining a single composite operating characteristic value based on the determined operating characteristic values of the at least one operating characteristic.

38. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein said determining of said single composite operating characteristic value comprises computing a weighted index that weighs relative importance of said at least one operating characteristic.

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**REMARKS**

This amendment is submitted in response to an Office Action mailed June 15, 2001. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the subject application in view of the remarks to follow.

As part of this response, Applicants have added new claims 35-38. These added claims have not been made to overcome the cited references and the added claims are not to be interpreted as having been made to overcome the cited references. Applicants have also amended the specification to provide the missing application numbers. All amendments are fully supported by the original